United Nations A/56/PV.1

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

1st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 12 September 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Temporary President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Finland

The Temporary President: I declare open the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Expression of sympathy

The Temporary President: At the outset, I should like, on behalf of us all, to express our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of the host country, the United States of America, for the tragic, unspeakable loss of life resulting from yesterday's horrendous terrorist acts. What happened yesterday goes beyond our imagination and against every principle that the United Nations stands for. The Organization must now stand in support of the United States and intensify its efforts to root out the scourge of terrorism.

Our hearts also go out to the citizens of New York City, the seat of the Organization, and the heroic men and women who have given their lives in the effort to save others. As yesterday's tragedy is bringing together citizens of their city, it should also bring together States Members of the United Nations, so that what happened yesterday will never happen again.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Temporary President: Before calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that as we do so we also observe the International Day of Peace on this, the opening day of a regular session of the General Assembly, as proclaimed by the Assembly in its resolutions 36/67 of 30 November 1981 and 52/232 of 4 June 1998, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Item 137 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/56/345)

The Temporary President: Before turning to the other items on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/56/345, which has been circulated in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that 15

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01-53358 (E)

Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in documents A/56/345?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The Temporary President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the fifty-sixth session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: China, Denmark, Jamaica, Lesotho, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Singapore, the United States of America and Uruguay.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Election of the President of the General Assembly

The Temporary President: I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President of the General Assembly at the fifty-sixth session should be elected from among the Asian States.

In this connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Asian States that the group has endorsed the candidacy of His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for the presidency of the General Assembly.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo and I invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Han Seung-soo took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Han Seung-soo, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session

The President: It is with a most grave and solemn mind that I take this podium, as the horrific events of yesterday cast a pall over our proceedings today. Mere words cannot express the outrage and disgust we doubtless all feel for the vile actions perpetrated in our host country, the United States of America. I condemn in the strongest possible terms these heinous acts of terrorism. I pray for those who lost their lives and on behalf of the General Assembly offer our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the innocent victims. My most profound feelings of sympathy and solidarity also go out to the people and Government of the United States, as well as to the citizens of New York City, at this time of great distress.

These terrorist crimes were, in effect, acts of war against all the world's peace-loving peoples. Their primary target was, by a vicious twist of fate, located in the very city which is home to the world's foremost institution dedicated to promoting world peace. The opening of this session of the General Assembly has been delayed by a day due to this tragedy, but no terrorists can ever deflect this body from the task to which it has dedicated itself since 1945: ending the

scourge of war in whatever form it may take, once and for all.

Now let me share my vision of the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. At the outset, I would like to express sincere gratitude to my predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, whose outstanding leadership was instrumental in making the fifty-fifth session highly successful. I wish President Holkeri all the best in his future endeavours. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his untiring efforts and selfless dedication to the highest ideals of the United Nations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Member States, particularly the countries of the Asian Group, for the confidence they have placed in me.

As I begin my term of office, I have profoundly mixed feelings. While I am overwhelmed by the honour accorded me and my country, I feel at the same time a tremendous burden of responsibility. This is particularly so as I come from a country that has had a long and unique relationship with the United Nations. Indeed, the United Nations has been closely involved with my country since the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948 and through the post-Korean War recovery period and the economic development of later years.

Following the end of the cold war, the Republic of Korea joined the United Nations in 1991. I would like to believe that my election to this post, coinciding with the tenth anniversary of Korea's admission to the United Nations, constitutes a recognition by the Member States of Korea's increased contribution to the international community.

Fifty-six years ago, the United Nations was born amid hopes for a lasting peace in the wake of two devastating world wars. In the Charter, the United Nations founding fathers set forth lofty goals and principles aimed at promoting international peace and security, as well as the economic and social advancement of all peoples. Success was never easy, and failure often seemed inevitable. However, with its record of both successes and failures, the United Nations has come to be regarded as the sole universal body representing humanity's highest collective aspirations.

When the cold war ended a decade ago, the international community faced new challenges and opportunities. As the danger of global conflict receded, the world was confronted with new threats to peace and development such as regional and sectarian conflicts and the kinds of terrorist acts that reached a crescendo of violence yesterday.

At the same time, the tide of globalization surges ever onward, bringing both benefits and problems in its wake. While greater interdependence and increased cross-border movement have dramatically enhanced the well-being of mankind in many ways, there is a negative side as well, that is, the growing problem of disease and pollution, recurring financial crises, and increasing cross-border crime — especially trafficking in drugs, weapons and illegal migrants. In several of these areas, the various United Nations agencies have been active for decades. Now, more than ever before, the United Nations is required to serve as a focal point for coordinating global efforts to address these new challenges.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the importance of the Millennium Summit held in this Hall last year. The Summit provided a unique opportunity to review the United Nations progress, to assess its achievements and shortcomings, and to chart the way forward. The Millennium Declaration adopted at the end of the Summit is surely the definitive statement of the challenges and tasks facing the United Nations at this stage in its history. As this is the first session of the General Assembly following the Millennium Summit, one of our most important tasks will be follow-up and implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

We all recognize that an important element of the Millennium Declaration is the resolve of leaders to strengthen the United Nations. I think it is noteworthy that they reaffirmed the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. As President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, I will continue the ongoing initiatives to improve the working methods of the Assembly, in close consultation with all Member States. I will also do my best to move forward the discussions on Security Council reform, with the goal of having a more representative, transparent and effective Security Council.

Given the fundamental changes in the international environment, the United Nations role in maintaining peace and security has expanded and become more complex. I therefore attach great importance to improving the United Nations capacity to respond to conflicts in a more effective manner, including consideration of the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report. If it is to do its job of maintaining international peace and security, the United Nations needs to be given the necessary tools and resources to carry out peace operations.

Also at the Millennium Summit, the world's leaders pledged their best efforts to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law and to expand protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Freedom and human rights are truly the birthright of all humanity. The Assembly has to work continuously to promote the human rights of all people. But some categories of human beings are more vulnerable than others, and hence more likely to suffer the loss of that precious birthright. Perhaps the most vulnerable are children, women and displaced persons, who need our special concern and protection.

The United Nations should also strengthen and expand its efforts to prevent and suppress terrorism. All forms of terrorism, whatever their motivation, are an assault on human decency and threaten democracy and democratic values, and thus cannot be justified under any circumstances. Yesterday's terrorist attacks not only compel our attention, but underscore anew the urgency of action by the international community, particularly by the United Nations, against this deadly menace. I pledge my best efforts to that end.

In view of the accelerating progress of globalization and the uneven sharing of its benefits, the issue of development is receiving renewed attention and is being considered from fresh perspectives. More specifically, the question of how to ensure that developing countries share in the benefits of globalization in general, and of information and communication technology in particular, requires our urgent consideration and action. In that regard, I would like to call the attention of the Assembly to a couple of the most important issues to command our attention during my presidency of the General Assembly: bridging the digital divide, and the development of Africa.

The explosive growth of information and communication technologies is opening up boundless new possibilities for accelerated economic and social development. But the capacity of individual countries to take advantage of the digital revolution varies greatly. Indeed, the least developed countries, which could gain so much from information and communication technologies, are the very ones that lack the capacity to translate that potential into reality.

In my view, the General Assembly can make useful contributions by calling global attention to the need for bridging the digital divide. Such efforts by the General Assembly would be timely and constructive in the run-up to the World Summits on the Information Society in 2003 and 2005, planned by the International Telecommunication Union.

In their Millennium Declaration, the world's leaders expressed their deep concern, and highlighted the need to bring Africa into the mainstream of world economic development, in the common interest of all humanity. The Governments and peoples of Africa, together with the United Nations system and the donor community, have striven for decades to eradicate poverty and generate sustainable development. Yet all too often, their best efforts have met with setbacks caused by political strife, armed conflict and, since the 1980s, the devastating spread of HIV/AIDS.

Fortunately, the recent summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Lusaka gave a clear political lead on that issue through the new African initiative. I urge that all Member States continue to work together to explore more effective ways and means of assisting African countries in their pursuit of sustainable development.

Having outlined my agenda, I am confident that, working together, we can accomplish what we set out to do. My personal contribution will necessarily be a modest one. All these endeavours to which I will devote myself will be difficult to bring to fruition without the full support and cooperation of all of you. Thus, I humbly ask you to give me your invaluable support and guidance in discharging my duties as President of the General Assembly.

Finally, allow me to suggest that, at this point in history, we should harken back to the original spirit and principles of the United Nations. Let us place first, before anything else, the transcendent vision enshrined in the Charter, namely, the constant and untiring

pursuit of peace, security, equality, human rights, fundamental freedoms and economic and social advancement for all the peoples on this planet. While respecting the sovereign rights and legitimate national interests of all nations, let us strive to make our common future a worthy legacy for succeeding generations. Let us, moreover, seek harmony through diversity, peace through dialogue, and mutual prosperity through cooperation. And so, as we assemble here in the world's greatest parliament, let us rededicate ourselves to the founding principles of the United Nations and renew our commitment to complete the unfinished tasks that lie before us.

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Condemnation of terrorist attacks in the United States of America (A/56/L.1)

Special session on the General Assembly on Children (A/56/L.2)

The President: I should now like to consult the Assembly with a view to considering immediately draft resolution A/56/L.1 and draft decision A/56/L.2. In this connection, since both documents have been circulated only this afternoon, it will be necessary to wave the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to consider draft resolution A/56/L.1 and draft decision A/56/L.2.

It was so decided.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President — and congratulations on your election to this important responsibility. I can only regret, as you yourself have done, that you should have to assume it at such a dark day for the United States, and indeed for the whole world, and that this draft resolution should be the first item of business over which you preside.

Our host country, and this wonderful host city that has been so good to us over five decades, have just been subjected to a terrorist attack such as we had hardly dared to imagine, even in our worst nightmares. We are all struggling to find words to express our sense of grief and outrage, our profound sympathy for the untold numbers of injured and bereaved, and our solidarity with the people and Government of the United States in this hour of trial.

We are struggling, too, to voice our intense admiration and respect for the valiant police officers, fire fighters and workers of all kinds who are engaged in the rescue and recovery effort — and especially for those, far too numerous, whose determination to help their fellow men and women has cost them their own lives.

We are all struggling, above all, to find adequate words of condemnation for those who planned and carried out these abominable attacks. In truth, no such words can be found. And words, in any case, are not enough.

This Assembly has condemned terrorism on numerous occasions. It has said repeatedly that terrorist acts are never justified, no matter what considerations may be invoked. It has called on all States to adopt measures, in accordance with the Charter and other relevant provisions of international law, to prevent terrorism and strengthen international cooperation against it.

We must now go further.

Earlier today, as you know, the Security Council expressed its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to yesterday's attacks and to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter.

I trust that it will indeed take such steps, and that this Assembly — and all its members — will follow suit. All nations of the world must be united in their solidarity with the victims of terrorism, and in their determination to take action — both against the terrorists themselves and against all those who give them any kind of shelter, assistance or encouragement.

I trust that that message will go out loud and clear to the whole world from every member of this Assembly, which represents the whole world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): On behalf of the African Group, it is my honour, Sir, to congratulate you on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Clearly, this is neither the day nor the time for any celebration. I hope there will be another appropriate time for us to welcome you once more.

The tragedy that befell the people of the United States is senseless, horrific, and totally beyond belief. On behalf of the African Group, allow me to express our sincere and heartfelt condolences to President George W. Bush, the Government and the people of the United States. Our hearts go out particularly to the people of New York, and especially to our colleagues at the United States Mission to the United Nations, led by Ambassador James B. Cunningham.

For those of us who have the honour to serve in the United Nations, yesterday's tragic events serve to remind us of the heavy responsibility we all bear. We would like to assure you, Sir, of our fullest support and cooperation. We are confident that under your leadership we will make significant progress in addressing global challenges. We remain deeply shocked and distressed at the callous terrorist attacks of yesterday. We hope that the perpetrators of these cowardly acts will soon face the full might of the law. We have no doubt that all members of the international community will cooperate in seeing that justice is done.

The tragedies in Washington, D.C.; New York; and Pennsylvania have brought home the unrelenting threat that international terrorism poses to all States. It is now clearer than ever that no one is safe from terrorism. Today it is the people of the United States who are in tears. In truth, it is the whole world that is weeping. The challenge that the United Nations confronts is to intensify our collective efforts to live up to the preamble of the United Nations Charter, which calls upon us to

> "practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security".

Therefore, it is my honour to express the support of the African Group for the two draft resolutions that are before the Assembly.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): Sir, on behalf of the Asian Group, I wish to extend to you the warmest congratulations on the occasion of your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are fully confident that with your diplomatic skills, you will lead this session to a fruitful conclusion.

We all are profoundly shocked by the acts of barbarism that took place yesterday in New York and in Washington, D.C., which left thousands dead and thousands of others wounded. We strongly condemn these terrorist acts, as they constitute a naked insult to the conscience of humankind.

On behalf of the Asian Group, I wish to convey our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America, to the cities of New York and Washington, and to the families of the bereaved.

The Asian Group fully supports the draft resolution, contained in document A/56/L.1, condemning these terrorist attacks.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak here today on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The purpose of today's plenary meeting was to open the new session of the General Assembly. However, under the shadow of the horrifying tragedy that has struck New York; Washington, D.C.; and the whole of the United States, I feel that it is my duty, first of all, to raise our voice in protest against what we witnessed yesterday. Members of the Group of Eastern European States unanimously condemn these terrorist acts, which we perceive to be aimed not only at the United States of America but at the whole civilized world — indeed, the whole of humanity.

Let me express our Governments' deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims, their families and to the people and the Government of the United States.

We express our readiness to unite to strengthen immediately national and international efforts to prevent and suppress terrorism through increased cooperation and the full implementation of the relevant international anti-terrorist conventions, Security Council resolutions and national and regional security measures. I am convinced that the Group of Eastern European States, for its part, will unanimously support draft resolution A/56/L.1, which you, Sir, have so rightly proposed.

Given the circumstances, our work during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly will be extremely challenging and responsible. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election, and, at the same time, to express in advance my profound appreciation for the demanding work which lies ahead and which, I am sure, you will carry out in an excellent manner. We believe that, under your able leadership, we will continue to implement the necessary steps towards the fulfilment of the goals of the Millennium Summit Declaration.

I would also like to use this opportunity to express the appreciation and gratitude of the Group of Eastern European States to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, for his active role and devoted work as President of the General Assembly. We hope that his legacy will inspire us during this session of the General Assembly as well.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Guyana, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Ishmael (Guyana): I should like first of all, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, to express sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. You are bringing to that post a wealth of experience and skills from an illustrious career in academia and from the ministerial and other appointments that you have held at the highest levels of government. The Latin American and Caribbean Group has every confidence that you will provide the leadership and vision needed at this critical juncture in the history of this Organization, as significant developments in international relations continue to have an important impact on the work and activities of the United Nations.

I should also like at this time to convey the Group's appreciation to the immediate past President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Ambassador Holkeri of Finland, for his excellent stewardship over the past year.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group welcomes draft resolution A/56/L.1, which has just been introduced in the Assembly. The Group takes this opportunity to strongly condemn the almost unimaginable tragedy that occurred yesterday — a disastrous series of cruel and barbaric acts in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania that resulted in the loss of many, many innocent lives. We extend heartfelt sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States, and particularly to the victims of the dastardly acts. We share the pain of the residents of the host city, New York, and salute the courage of the fire fighters, police officers and others who gave their lives in a display of valour and courage that will be remembered forever.

The terrorist acts of yesterday must strengthen the resolve of the international community to condemn in the strongest possible terms all forms of terrorism, which are a threat to international peace and security. The Group reaffirms that those responsible must be brought to justice, and we stand in full support of the Government and the people of the United States at this time.

We give our full support to draft resolution A/56/L.1, as well as to the resolution adopted this morning by the Security Council on the matter of international terrorism.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): I would like, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. Indeed, I hope to have another, more propitious opportunity to welcome you in the future.

I would like, on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group, to condemn in the strongest possible terms yesterday's terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere in the United

States. It is a tragedy on an unprecedented scale that challenges all humanity. There can be no excuse or justification for these acts.

I would like to express our full solidarity with the Government of the United States and the American people for the hideous acts that led to the tragic loss of human life and extend our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims. These horrendous acts were an attack not only on the United States but on humanity itself and on the values and freedoms we all share. However, the life and work of our societies will continue undeterred.

We appeal to all States to work closely together to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of yesterday's outrageous acts. The United Nations should spare no effort towards our common goal of preventing and suppressing terrorist attacks everywhere in the world. In this respect, we fully support draft resolution A/56/L.1 and draft decision A/56/L.2, just presented to the General Assembly.

The President: We have heard from representatives of all the regional groups.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, as the host country.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): First, on behalf of the United States, I, too, would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and to pledge my Government's support for the success of this session.

Obviously, the hearts of all Americans are heavy today. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your words of condolence and sympathy for the victims and their families. I would like to personally convey the gratitude of President Bush and the American people to all the many world leaders and all the others throughout the world who have shown their support and offered their assistance in this time of grief. I would also like to say a special word of appreciation to the Secretary-General for his condolences and, particularly, for his remarks about the city of New York and its public servants and his call for a firm and united response.

We in this Hall are all New Yorkers at this time of tragedy. I have been struck by how many of you have expressed to me that sentiment. Indeed, unfortunately, many non-Americans will be counted among the victims of this attack. We are all grateful to the men and women — police, fire fighters, doctors and nurses — who have shown tremendous heroism in coping with the catastrophic aftermath of the terrible events of 11 September 2001. Our thoughts and prayers go to all the victims and their families. We will grieve, and we will heal.

Your decision, Mr. President, to open the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly was the right one. I appreciate the support and condolences expressed by the United Nations membership and the condemnation and sense of resolve expressed in the comments today. Together, we have demonstrated here, in the historic Hall of the General Assembly, that we are united and strong in the face of terror.

In his statement on the attacks of 11 September and his decision to evacuate United Nations Headquarters, the Secretary-General recognized that the attack on the United States was also an attack on the United Nations. The entire international community and the shared values upon which this institution was founded are under assault. Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), adopted just hours ago, demonstrates the determination of the international community to confront and triumph over this evil, as will the General Assembly draft resolution that we are about to address.

Yesterday's attack requires that we choose sides between the values of human rights and democracy, held dear by all decent people, and terrorism and the law of the jungle. There are those who oppose terrorism and those who use it. There should be no doubt that we will deal with those who support and harbour terrorists as we deal with the terrorists themselves.

Because this attack struck at all of us, it is right that we should work towards a coalition to defend our shared values against terrorism. Working in coalition, we can multiply the effectiveness of our response. The victims of this attack and their families need our prayers and the certain knowledge of a unified response. We owe to them and to ourselves swift action to find those responsible for these attacks and to bring them to justice.

None of us or our children will forget yesterday's horrifying images. They will become unfortunate but indelible icons of the twenty-first century. Let them serve as a constant reminder of the need to eliminate

this scourge and of the need for determination and action to do so.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting.

I thank all representatives for their kind words addressed to me on my assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/56/L.1 was adopted (resolution 56/1).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/56/L.2.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision A/56/L.2 was adopted.

The President: I call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I think we will soon be taking a decision on the summit for children and that, if we decide to postpone it because of this force majeure, I would want to plead with the General Assembly that we keep our concern for children uppermost in our minds. This is only a postponement, not a cancellation, and the issue is still very much with us.

I think we should stay the course and adopt a concrete agenda for action for this decade. I think that, at this critical stage, we cannot afford to fail the children or wrangle indefinitely over text and documents. I believe that the draft outcome document for the special session is so close to being finalized. I would urge representatives that, despite the postponement, we keep up with that work and take up the issue as soon as next week. I think that, within a relatively short period, with good will and determination, we can have an agreed text. We are close and I do not want us to postpone it or relax because the meeting is not taking place next week. That is my plea.

The President: I should now like to refer to the two-day high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership.

By decision 55/479 of 12 April 2001, the General Assembly decided that the two-day high-level dialogue would take place on Monday and Tuesday, 17 and 18 September 2001. However, after consultations with the Chairmen of the regional Groups, there is an agreement that the two day high-level dialogue should now take place on Thursday and Friday, 20 and 21 September 2001, instead.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly decides to hold the two-day high-level dialogue on Thursday and Friday, 20 and 21 September 2001?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that the first meetings of the six Main Committees will take place consecutively tomorrow afternoon, Thursday, 13 September 2001, at 3 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall for the purpose of electing their respective Chairmen.

Immediately thereafter, the General Assembly will hold its second plenary meeting to elect its Vice-Presidents.

I call on the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I apologize for asking to speak, but I believe that I will be expressing a general view in what I am going to propose.

It is a kind of humanitarian addendum to the resolution we have just adopted. In this very tragic moment, it is our duty to offer our services to New York City and its courageous people. The members of the United Nations diplomatic community are not only parking-rules violators. We do love this city. We do love New York. We are a part of this great city and we want to help it.

Therefore, I would like to request the Secretary-General to establish, through the United Nations medical service, a United Nations diplomatic blood-donation centre to make our modest contribution to the ongoing New York City rescue process. I call upon all representatives to support this proposal.

The Secretary-General: I think the proposal of the representative of Azerbaijan has had a very good response from the ambassadors and representatives here. That means that the medical service will have no problems and will see lots of people queuing up to give blood.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.